Claims

What is claimed is:

1. A method of automatically manufacturing a computer comprising the steps of:

receiving an order from a customer;

assembling together a selection of hardware components specified by the order; and

loading onto the computer a software package specified by the order, including the steps of:

providing an Internet-accessible page for the customer to specify any software modifications required;

recording those modifications as an auto-configuration file; and

for each modification in the auto-configuration file, determining the configuration data corresponding thereto and entering that configuration data into the computer as the software package is being loaded.

2. The method according to claim 1 including the step of verifying the modifications against the order details.

3. The method according to claim 1 including the step of verifying the modifications against the current capabilities of the manufacturer.

4. The method according to claim 1 wherein the modifications are logged as they are made.

1   5.   The method according to claim 3 wherein the modifications are logged as they

2   are made.

1   6.   Apparatus for automatically manufacturing a computer, comprising:

2   an order unit for receiving an order from a customer;

3   an assembly unit for assembling together a selection of hardware

4   components specified by the order; and

5   for loading onto the computer, a software package specified by the order

6   including:

7   an Internet-accessible page onto which the customer can specify

8   any software modifications required;

9   a modification unit for recording those modifications as an auto-

10   configuration file; and

11   for each modification in the auto-configuration file, a control unit

12   for determining the configuration data corresponding thereto and

13   entering that configuration data into the computer as the software

14   packages is being loaded.

1   7.   The apparatus according to claim 6, including means for verifying the

2   modifications against the order details.

1   8.   The apparatus according to claim 6 including means for verifying the

2   modifications against the current capabilities of the manufacturer.

1   9.   The apparatus according to claim 6 including means for logging the

2   modifications as they are made.

1   10.   The apparatus according to claim 8 including means for logging the

2   modifications as they are made.

1   11.   An automated computer manufacturing method comprising the steps of:

2   receiving an order from a customer;

3   downloading the order to a manufacturing unit;

4   including an auto-configuration indicator in the order for a special

5   configuration requirement;

6   generating a flag to look for the special configuration requirement;

7   making an inquiry to a manufacturing database for the special

8   configuration requirement; and

9   if located, applying the special configuration requirement to the order.

1   12.   The method according to claim 11 including the step of generating an order

2   reference number.

1   13.   The method according to claim 12 including the step of accepting the order.

1   14.   The method according to claim 12 including the step of processing the special

2   configuration requirement in parallel with a standard configuration

3   requirement.

1   15.   The method according to claim 12 including the step of logging the special

2   configuration requirement into a manufacturing log.

1   16.   The method according to claim 15 including the step of shipping the order to the

2   customer.

1   17.   The method according to claim 11 including the steps of:

2   assembling together a selection of hardware components specified by the

3   order;

4   loading into the computer a software package specified by the order,

5   including the steps of:

6   providing an Internet-accessible page for the customer to specify any

7   software modifications required;

8   recording those modifications as an auto-configuration file; and

9   for each modification in the auto-configuration file, determining the

10   configuration requirement corresponding thereto and entering

11   configuration requirement data into the computer as the software package

12   is being loaded.

1   18.   The method according to claim 17 including the step of verifying each

2   modification against the order.

1   19.   The method according to claim 17 including the step of verifying each

2   modification against current manufacturing capabilities.

1   20.   The method according to claim 17 wherein each of the modifications is logged.